

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to investigate a multi-country outbreak of unexplained atypical pneumonia referred to as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). As of April 12, 2003, 2960 suspect and/or probable cases and 119 deaths have been reported worldwide. As of April 10, 2003, 166 suspect cases have been reported in the United States. Three suspect cases have been reported in Michigan. Most of the cases worldwide have been reported from China and Hong Kong.

The syndrome appears to be spread through droplet transmission. However, air transmission and fomite transmission may be possible. The cause of SARS is believed to be a new or previously unrecognized coronavirus.

Suspected cases that meet the following surveillance case definition should be reported by physicians to the Macomb County Health Department Communicable Disease Program at (586) 783-8190:

Respiratory illness of unknown etiology and with onset since February 1, 2003, and the following criteria:

- Measured temperature 100.5°F (>38°C) **AND**
- One or more clinical findings of respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, hypoxia, or radiographic findings of either pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome) **AND**
- Travel¹ within 10 days of onset of symptoms to an area with documented or suspected community transmission of SARS (see list below; excludes areas with secondary cases limited to healthcare workers or direct household contacts) **OR**
- Close contact* within 10 days of onset of symptoms with either a person with a respiratory illness who traveled to a SARS area or a person known to be a suspect SARS case.

Areas with documented or suspected community transmission of SARS: Peoples' Republic of China (i.e., mainland China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region); Hanoi, Vietnam; and Singapore

¹Travel includes transit in an airport in an area with documented or suspected community transmission of SARS.

* Close contact is defined as having cared for, having lived with, or having direct contact with respiratory secretions and/or body fluids of a patient known to be a suspect SARS case.

Updated information about SARS can be found at the World Health Organization (WHO) website (www.who.in) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (www.cdc.gov), and the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) website (www.michigan.gov/mdch).